

“I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved.” Acts 2:25

HE IS ALWAYS THERE

by Craig Marlatt

It’s wonderful how the Lord uses the difficulties of our lives to teach us how to live by faith. It almost seems as though we can’t learn any other way. We usually learn our most useful ‘Life Lessons’ through the trials and difficulties of our daily walk with Christ.

Though the struggle appears sometimes to be never ending, it helps me to remember that the Lord is always with me. Though others may be unfaithful, Jesus says, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee”. Like David we must foresee the Lord always before our face. And He is always there. Just as Paul told the Epicureans and Stoics in Athens, “That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though He be not far from every one of us.” If He is “. . . not far from everyone”, then He is certainly ‘close’ to those who love him.

One of my all time favorite movies is the Ten Commandments. We have it on video tape and when I’m really going through the blues or wondering where God is, it usually helps me to pull it out and watch it. I think it’s because I like to hear God and Moses talking to each other. I’ve always wished that God would call me from a burning bush, or turn my hair white like He did to Moses in the movie. Actually my hair seems to be going that way on its own without God’s help, but I’ve yet to have a burning bush call my name.

On the contrary my walk with the Lord has mostly been a daily moving from what I am . . . to what He wants me to be. In between, the successes and failures usually turn out to be the tools that the Lord uses most to change me. In other words in my efforts to change the world for Christ, He changes me. The Lord uniquely prepares me throughout the whole of my life for the work that He has called me to do.

Though in some ways we would all like to see ourselves as a Moses, I wonder if we really could handle the pressure and responsibility of such personal daily intimacy with God. Are we really ready to stand before the burning bush in our dirty bare feet? Though we should be, I doubt that most of us are. Certainly I wonder about myself.

One night I was going through an old notebook of mine and in it was a poem that I wrote in 1976, just months after I got out of prison. Reading it took me back to the early days of my Christian life.

Oh Heavenly Father
How great You must be
To create all these things
And still have time for me.

If I could see your precious face,
But Father I can wait.
Till all your children come to rest
Inside of Heavens gate.

O’ God of all , O’ King of Kings

Who gave Yourself for Me
I give what ever of self I have,
I give it all to Thee.

I still feel this way after years of walking with him. It's good to know He is always there. Not because I'm so good, but just because He loves me. We all need to feel that way: to bank our hopes on the Lord's promise that He is always with us "even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28: 20). The struggles that come our way cannot defeat us if we look to the Saviour who came "not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17).

What lies ahead for us all is yet to be seen, but our hope is in Christ, and He can be trusted. Paul said in 2 Timothy 1:12, ". . .for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." He is the Good Shepherd and He will lead us beside the still waters and into green pastures.

And so we keep on plugging away at that to which we are called: to know Him. It is the high calling of every true Christian regardless of race, doctrinal creed, occupation or calling to "know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable unto his death" (Philippians 3:10).

But there is something we must do: By faith we must see Him there, always before our face. Paul tells us to ". . .seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1,2). Recognize that He is there and that He is walking through our life with us conforming us into the image of his Son along the way. And we know that these things are true because He says so in his Word. And we believe his Word, because we are. . . believers

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Like King David, when we choose to see the Lord always before us, the benefits of that confession, made by faith, will also be imparted unto us, "for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was made glad; moreover my flesh shall rest in hope; Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance" (Acts 2:25-28).

There is real joy in knowing Christ, and it is full. We must look to the One who "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2). Like Christ we too will one day sit in the presence of God forevermore. In the meantime it is great comfort knowing that He is with us, going before us and making our path straight toward eternal victory.

And have you trusted the Saviour with your life? Do you know that He loves you and will care for you like a father for his children? And even better because He is the Perfect Father. If you haven't, why not? He is there now and He's waiting to hear you call His name. Surrender your all to Him and He will give His all to you. What better deal does life have to offer than this ? And having done so we can have the great pleasure of

living our lives knowing that He is with us and going before us through the twists and turns of life. Preparing the way to keep us safe from harm.